

Dentist Appointed to State Board.—Governor Frank F. Merriam has appointed V. A. Rossiter, D.D.S., of Santa Ana, to membership on the California State Board of Public Health. Doctor Rossiter is the eighth member of the Board, his appointment having been provided through an amendment to Section 372 of the Political Code enacted by the 1937 session of the Legislature.

Heart Disease.—The crude death rate for heart disease, which ranks first among all the causes of death, dropped slightly in 1937. A bright spot in the heart disease mortality record is the fact that the rate is declining among young people where most of the deaths are caused by chronic endocarditis, which, in turn, is most often induced by infectious diseases, chiefly acute rheumatism, streptococcal infection, and syphilis. The trend is still upward for cardiac diseases of the senescent or arteriosclerotic type which are predominant in the higher age ranges of life and which are, for the most part, the result of the inevitable breakdown of the organism with advancing age.

Eye Health to Be Studied at Summer Session.—Annette M. Phelan, Ph.D., Associate in Education, National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, has accepted an invitation to offer two courses in eye health education in the University of California Summer Session, June 27 to August 5. One course, Eye Health of the School Child, will deal with educational and health problems involved in visual defects among school children; and the other course, Eye Health in Teacher Education, will take up the eye health content of curricula for teacher education in the light of contributions by the sciences, teaching practices and classroom conditions.

Miss Phelan has been instructor in Health Education at Columbia University since 1933. She is the author of "A Study of School Health Standards," "Conserving the Sight of School Children," and a co-author of "Adventures in Living."

Summer Session Bulletins will be mailed upon request by the Dean of the Summer Sessions, 104 California Hall, Berkeley, California.

American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology Examinations.—The oral, clinical, and pathological examinations for Group A and Group B applicants will be held in San Francisco, California, on Monday and Tuesday, June 13 and 14, 1938.

An informal dinner for the diplomates of this Board, their wives and others interested in the work of the Board, will be held at the Palace Hotel, San Francisco, on Wednesday evening, June 15, 1938, at seven o'clock. Dr. William D. Cutter, Secretary of the Council on Medical Education and Hospitals of the American Medical Association, will address the group, and the successful candidates of the preceding two days' examinations will be introduced in person. Tickets, at \$2.25 each, may be obtained in advance from Dr. Joseph L. Baer, 104 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, or at the door. Reservations should be made in advance if possible.

Application blanks and booklets of information may be obtained from Dr. Paul Titus, Secretary, 1015 Highland Building, Pittsburgh (6), Pennsylvania.

National Health Council's Library on Public Health Literature.—Research workers from all parts of the United States used the facilities of the National Health Council Library, at 50 West Fifth Street, New York City, during the past year, and they were used also by education and nurses' training classes in local and nearby colleges. In 1937, the services of the library were made available more than 1,500 times to others than staff members of the seven-teen organizations in the Council.

The library now contains more than six thousand volumes and thirty thousand pamphlets dealing with public health, sanitation, hygiene, and related subjects. More than five hundred medical and educational periodicals are received regularly from all parts of the world. As an aid to public libraries in the selection of books on health subjects, a list of approximately three hundred health books of interest to the general public is being compiled at present.

Active member agencies in the National Health Council include the following: American Society for the Hard of Hearing, American Heart Association, American Public Health Association, American Red Cross, American Social Hygiene Association, American Society for the Control of Cancer, Conference of State and Provincial Health Authorities of North America, Maternity Center Association, National Committee of Health Council Executives, National Committee for Mental Hygiene, National Organization for Public Health Nursing, National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, and the National Tuberculosis Association.

The United States Children's Bureau and the United States Public Health Service are advisory members of the Council. The American Nurses' Association and the Foundation for Positive Health are associate members.

New York State Enacts First Prenatal Health Law. As the *News* goes to press, comes word that Governor Lehman has signed the Twomey-Newell "baby health bill," recently passed by both houses of the New York State Legislature. New York thus has the honor of being the first state to enact a law for the protection of the unborn from congenital syphilis. It is, in fact, the first law of its kind to be enacted anywhere.

Thirteen thousand New York State babies, health authorities estimate, will be saved each year from death or disease by this law,¹ which requires all persons licensed to attend women in pregnancy to administer, or cause to have administered, a standard serological test, and to indicate on the birth or stillbirth certificate if such test was made. If the test has not been made, the reason for the omission must be shown, but results of such tests are not to be indicated on the certificate.

This life-saving legislation is an example of results obtained when all concerned work together. Drafted by social hygiene experts, proposed by the *New York Post*,² supported strongly by other New York newspapers, endorsed by official and voluntary health agencies, medical societies and civic groups, the bill moved forward steadily to passage by an overwhelming majority.

As the prenatal bill was made into law, the Desmond-Breitbart bill for premarital examination for syphilis was being pressed forward to passage before the legislature adjourns. With the signing of this second bill, New York State will have taken two long steps toward stamping out syphilis within its borders. If every state will do likewise, "within a generation" need not be an extravagant prophecy as to when the "shadow" may "lift from our land."

Press Clippings.—Some news items from the lay press, on matters related to medical practice, follow:

Revenue Producing Apartments Can Be Made of Old Houses*

Outmoded residence properties, still structurally sound but no longer in demand by reason of excessive size, dated architecture, or neighborhood changes, may be converted into revenue-producing flats and apartments with funds available under the Property Improvement Credit Plan of the Federal Housing Administration.

Many residential landmarks are today but specters of past magnificence—deserted, falling into dilapidation, unwanted by the descendants of the original owner. These properties cannot be rented for homes in their present condition and serve only to gather unwanted taxes for the owners. Many have been demolished to ease the tax burden or with the hope of renting the vacant lot for some purpose.

By the expenditure of a reasonable amount of modernization many old homes may be remodeled into several small apartment units and placed on an income basis that will justify the expenditure.

The provisions of the National Housing Act as amended permit the insurance of modernization loans up to \$10,000 on a single property. Repayments are made in equal

¹ Four thousand infants are now born annually in New York with syphilis, and these and nearly half the annual toll of 18,000 still births could be prevented by early diagnosis and treatment of the mother for this disease.

² In an editorial of January 5, and illustrated feature articles, Health and welfare agencies interested in promoting this type of legislation in their own states may secure a limited number of reprints of the *Post* articles upon request to the American Social Hygiene Association at 50 West Fifth Street, New York.

* Editor's Note.—This item may have suggestive value to smaller county medical societies, or branches of larger societies, contemplating "headquarters," and to those already in possession of a "headquarters home."

monthly installments over a period of as long as five years and thirty-two days. Charges for this credit are reasonable. The Federal Housing Administration insures the loans, and the funds are made available by private lending institutions, including banks, building and loan associations, finance companies and like agencies.

Extensive alterations necessary to remodel a dwelling for apartment purposes do not always require the service of an architect, but the scope of the work makes it desirable. Among the improvements eligible to be financed under the Property Improvement Credit Plan are: Installation of new heating, wiring and plumbing units and systems; redivision of floor space, painting and papering, and any other improvements that become an integral part of the building.

The exterior may require extensive alteration, which may also be financed with loans insured by the Federal Housing Administration. Brick work may be pointed up, roof repaired, or a new roof put on; porches removed, walkways and drives built, entrances cut, and the building painted.

Depreciation checked by modernization will pay off in income in many instances. A dwelling is not usually obsolete unless the structure is so unsound that it would be more economical to completely rebuild it.—Los Angeles *Evening News*, April 7.

Hospitalization Program Ruled Illegal by Webb

Corporations cannot engage in the practice of medicine. Firms not licensed to insure cannot issue contracts providing for medical and surgical care and hospitalization.

Citing California law to this effect, Attorney-General Webb yesterday gave an opinion in San Francisco that the First National Protective Association of Los Angeles was obtaining members on a contract which violated a previous ruling that corporations cannot engage in the practice of medicine.

Opinion Transmitted

The opinion was transmitted to State Insurance Commissioner Carpenter following an inquiry concerning the association's operations by Inspector Risbrough of the Los Angeles office.

Webb held that the contract violated the State Medical Practice Act because it agreed to furnish medical service, which corporations are not permitted to do. It also violated the insurance law providing that only licensed insurers can issue policies, because the contract provided insurance, he said.

No Previous Complaints

"We have operated for five years without complaint," James W. Weitzman, president and general manager of the association, said. "If we are operating in a manner not in conformity with California law we shall have to revise our organization. We are now organized as a nonprofit corporation."

The association's offices are at 416 West Eighth Street.—Los Angeles *Times*, March 25.

Two Hundred Dogs Impounded in Los Angeles Quarantine

For the second day, crews of city humane department officers patrolled the city today to enforce the new quarantine against dogs.

Bertram E. Morse, inspector in charge of the Ann Street Shelter, and other humane officers reported that more than 200 dogs had been impounded in the drive under the direction of Dr. George Parrish, city health officer and chief advocate of the quarantine, and Dr. C. C. Warn, head of the humane department.

The animals in the various pounds will be held under observation for rabies for ten days. Then unlicensed or unclaimed dogs will be destroyed, and those with a license and found to be healthy can be reclaimed by owners.

General rules of the quarantine:

Dogs must be confined in the home or on the premises of the owner at all times; or must be kept on leash in the custody of a person over 15 years of age when in a public street or public place; or must be securely confined in closed automobiles on the public highway.

Claim Only Part of Dog Fees Used for Humane Department Work

With Los Angeles dog population under the restraint of a quarantine, dog owners today were renewing their demands for a more adequate humane department in the city and for more diligently enforced preventive measures as a means of effectively minimizing rabies danger.

Los Angeles' humane department facilities are inadequate and antiquated, it was pointed out, despite the fact that dog owners of the city pay into the public treasury annually a sum in excess of \$200,000 in dog license fees.

This sum, it is contended, is ample in every way to provide an adequate humane department, large and efficient enough to cope with any situation.

Claim Fund Diverted

The rub, according to the dog owners, is that much of the money paid in license fees is not used for the humane department, but rather is put into the city general fund and is expended for purposes which have nothing to do with small animal regulation.

James Lindsey, executive head of the Tailwagger Association, an association of dog owners and dog lovers, cited figures to show how much of the annual dog license money is being diverted from humane department purposes.

In 1937, Lindsey pointed out, 83,624 dogs were licensed in Los Angeles city. The fees from these licenses plus smaller amounts realized from kennel license charges and pound fees, brought the receipts for the year to \$213,240.

Put in General Fund

However, only \$98,771 of this amount was put back into the humane department as budgetary expense. The remainder, \$114,469, considerably more than half the money collected from dog owners, went into the general fund of the city and was used for general municipal purposes.

Last year was not an exceptional year in this regard. For the past four years the surplus earnings of the humane department have been consistently more than \$100,000 a year. During the twenty years of the department's existence, there has been diverted into the city's general fund surplus earnings from the humane department of \$1,230,688.

Lindsey and other dog owners contend that if only a reasonable portion of this surplus were spent in an effective humane patrol that would pick up stray dogs and cats and would police the city for sick animals, that the possibility of rabies becoming epidemic would be almost nil.

"But the city does not do this," said Lindsey, "despite the fact that dog owners tax themselves more than \$200,000 annually in Los Angeles in the hope of getting such service."

Lindsey pointed out that many dog owners are threatening to discontinue the payment of license fees unless more of the money goes for the purposes intended.

"A Superior Court in San Diego County decided last April that it was unconstitutional to exact a license fee from owners who keep their animals on their own premises at all times," said Lindsey. "A large proportion of Los Angeles dog owners keep their animals continually under such restraint and feel that they would be justified legally in refusing to pay the license under this ruling."—Los Angeles *Times*, April 7.

Dr. Harold Brunn Named by Surgeons

Election of Dr. Harold Brunn of San Francisco as president of the American Association for Thoracic Surgery at the group's convention in Atlanta, Ga., was reported on April 5 by the Associated Press. He succeeds Dr. Stuart W. Harrington of Rochester, Minn.—San Francisco *Examiner*, April 6, 1938.

Rabies Fatal

Los Angeles, March 25.—(AP)—Rufus Bradley died today of rabies, the second victim of a mad dog, which bit him a month ago. Stephen Wilson, the first victim, died last week. Seven others bitten by the dog took the Pasteur treatment. Bradley and Wilson did not.—San Francisco *Examiner*, March 26.

American College of Physicians

New York, April 7.—(AP)—The new president of the American College of Physicians, William J. Kerr, M.D., of San Francisco, took office today and promised forward action on "medical situations arising in the country."

His remarks were taken to refer to the proposal of the association's retiring president, Dr. James H. Means of Boston, last night to organize an opposition party within the American Medical Association and "bring to light leaders" to solve problems of medical care and proposed federal medical aid. . . .—Los Angeles *Examiner*, April 8.

Aid for Sufferers

Safe Use of Sulfanilamide

Memphis (Tenn.), March 28.—(AP)—Dr. William B. Wendel, University of Tennessee chemist, said today he had developed methylene blue dye as a means of counteracting ill effects of sulfanilamide.

The chemist said that an injection of the blue dye erases one of the most serious toxic effects sulfanilamide produces, as well as providing a simple method of determining when a person is suffering such use of the drug.

Sulfanilamide has been successful in the treatment of throat irritations, erysipelas and mastoid.

"With the development of methylene blue dye as an antidote," Wendel said, "there should be no reason why sulfanilamide should not be administered safely in nearly all cases."—San Francisco *Examiner*, March 29.

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Split in United States Doctor Group Widens

Chicago, April 8.—(AP)—A new attack by Dr. Morris Fishbein, spokesman for the American Medical Association, on the use of federal funds for public medical service, widened the breach today between groups at odds over the question.

Doctor Fishbein said in an address last night that "only the physician is capable of determining the real medical needs of the people."

"Proposals for the use of federal funds in medical service," he said, "are in accord with the extraordinary delusions of grandeur and with the vague and misguided conceptions that continue to emanate from the social service workers who have sought to assume control of the practice of medicine in the United States."

Reply to Statement

Doctor Fishbein replied to Dr. James H. Means, retiring president of the American College of Physicians, who said in a New York address it would be "wholesome" if there was an "enlightened opposition party within the Democracy of the American Medical Association." Doctor Means said he was "not advocating a revolt" against the association.

"Doctor Means," said Doctor Fishbein, "is unfortunately typical of a considerable number of physicians snugly ensconced in laboratories or in full-time positions in medical schools who are unaware of the problems of the general practitioner and who never see the people or even understand those whom they would serve."

Seek U. S. Funds

Their chief objective, Doctor Fishbein continued, was to secure "more and more government funds for the subsidizing of medical education, of hospitals and of the care of the sick." This, he contended, would lead to "confiscatory taxation" of industry and the individual worker "for the benefit of the employees of the bureaucracy and those who have not or will not work."

He said the medical profession has compiled a record in the United States that could challenge that of any state-controlled system in foreign nations. The profession, he added, does not propose to relinquish its functions until satisfied that "some other system will give better medical service to more people."

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Health Plan Action Sought

The California State Supreme Court yesterday was asked to set in operation San Francisco's municipal employees' health insurance plan.

Unable to consider the matter at their conference yesterday, Justices of the Court postponed discussion of the plan until Thursday or Friday.

Asked from the Court, in a petition filed by the Health Service Board, was a writ of mandate directing Controller Harold Boyd to make available to the board all sums deducted from the compensation of members of the health service system.

Court test of the legality of the health plan was forced by Boyd when he refused to turn initial collections over to the board. The plan provides deductions of \$2.50 per month from over 11,500 city workers.

Boyd forced the court action because numerous employee groups of the city have assailed the plan.—San Francisco *Examiner*, March 22.

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Cancer Control Month Called

Washington, March 28.—(AP)—The White House made public today a proclamation by President Roosevelt proclaiming April as cancer control month and urging support for a national program for the control of cancer by education.

The President invited governors of the states and territories to issue similar proclamations.—San Francisco *Examiner*, March 29.

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Los Angeles County Auto Death Toll Reaches 231

Three men were dead today, and a three-year-old boy may die of injuries in traffic accidents that made the figures for the year's death toll to date, read 231 for Los Angeles County.—Los Angeles *Evening News*, April 7.

Five Hundred Thousand Are Victims of Daily Injuries Ten Million Accidents Each Year in U. S.

Washington, April 2.—Ten million accidents serious enough to disable their victims one day or longer occur annually in the United States.

Each day 500,000 persons are unable to work, go to school or pursue their usual activities as the result of injuries caused by accidents resulting from multiple sources, the Public Health Service announced today.

The service disclosed that 7 per cent of the deaths among the 70,000 families canvassed were the result of accidental injury. Accidental deaths were exceeded only by mortalities from disease of the heart, cancer and pneumonia.

It was revealed that sixteen of every 1,000 persons are disabled for a week or longer by injuries each year. The average period of disability experienced by the victims of serious accidents is forty-six days. This is compared with the average duration of disability from all causes, which is fifty-seven days. Automobile accidents average fifty-five days of disability.

Many Are Maimed

Maiming injuries occur most frequently in the course of work, the report states, since 70 per cent of the lost fingers and 46 per cent of the loss of other members are attributed to occupational casualties. For impaired members, however, home accidents are of equal importance to industrial mishaps.

The home is far from being the safest place, as it is usually considered. More than 30 per cent of all accidents occur there. The home injuries result mainly from falls, burns and cuts.

Boys and men are more liable to suffer accidental injury than are girls and women until the age group above 65 years is reached. The situation is then reversed.

The greatest single source of accidental injury is the fall, which is credited with 39 per cent of all the serious disabling factors. Falls are even a greater menace at present than automobiles, which are responsible for 20 per cent of the nation's yearly accident toll.

Autos Are Deadly

However, the automobile is responsible for the greatest number of accidental fatalities. Persons injured in an automobile are two and one-half times as likely to die as persons injured by any other means.

The report associates the higher rate of accidents in the homes of the very poor with inadequate housing facilities. Faulty stairways, poor lighting and heating conditions and rickety furniture are all factors which are responsible for the excessive home injuries among the lower third income group.

The National Health Survey is attempting a solution of the nation's ever-increasing accident problem by endeavoring to ascertain the source and circumstances under which serious mishaps occur. In this way they hope to suggest preventive measures for each type of accident.—San Francisco *Examiner*, April 3.

LETTERS

Concerning a recent malpractice suit.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF INSTITUTIONS
MENDOCINO STATE HOSPITAL

Talmage, California,
March, 29, 1938.

To the Secretary:—I am just in receipt of a telephone message from Mr. Hartley Peart stating that the case of Sarah Florence vs. Doctors Toner, Beardslee, Reilly, Sheehy, Tillman, Cushman, and Mr. Charles Waymire, had been dismissed by order of Judge Michael Roche of the Federal Court in San Francisco. As you know, this suit for one million dollars was brought about three years since, and has been continued from time to time, has been stubbornly fought by the attorney for the plaintiff, Miss _____; but in spite of this strenuous effort on the part of the plaintiff and her attorney, it has now been terminated by the above-mentioned dismissal of the case.

I feel that this case was won only by the earnest, persistent, intelligent and painstaking effort of Mr. Hartley Peart, the attorney for the Medical Society of the State of California, and his associates, Messrs. Gus L. Baraty and Howard Hassard. I wish to express to you my heartfelt appreciation for the faithful service rendered by that society. I had, also, the assistance of Mr. Kilkenny, Deputy